

April 3, 2009

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chairwoman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, and
Related Agencies
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6016

The Honorable Jack Kingston
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Rural Development, and
Related Agencies
2362-A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6016

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Kingston,

We respectfully ask that you allocate \$203 million for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) in the Fiscal Year 2010 Agriculture Appropriations bill. As you know, CSFP is a critical nutrition program that delivers U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) commodities to primarily homebound seniors, and mothers and children. In this time of economic hardship, support for CSFP is more important than ever. It is often a program of last resort for seniors who qualify for no other form of nutrition assistance.

We are seeking full funding to maintain service at existing sites in 32 states, the District of Columbia, and 2 Indian Tribal Organizations; to expand service at these sites to meet the growing need experienced by all food assistance programs; and to finally begin service in six states (Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, New Jersey, Oklahoma, and Utah) with approved state plans that have been waiting up to six years. We estimate the fully funded cost to be \$203 million.

In 2008, CSFP provided, on average, 475,000 food packages each month to mothers, infants, children, and low-income seniors across the nation. Last year, 93 percent of the participants were elderly individuals with an income at or below \$13,270 per year. CSFP food packages are designed to supplement needed sources of nutrients typically lacking in recipients' diets, including protein, iron, zinc, and vitamins B-6 and B-12. CSFP providers also have been very cost efficient: the typical food package has a retail value up to \$60 but costs the Federal government \$19 per participant per month.

In a recent study of CSFP, the Urban Institute found that:

"CSFP has charms worth considering in designing human service programs. The administrative simplicity and familiar and comfortable atmosphere of the program are clearly attractions to a population that needs assistance but may be reluctant to seek help in settings it perceives as bureaucratic, stigmatized, or unsympathetic. The fact that the foods distributed are highly valued is clearly another [benefit]."

USDA/Urban Institute Study 2008

It is finally time to expand CSFP. Rising food costs and other unanticipated economic factors have prevented the intended Congressional expansion over the past three years. Since 2007, Congress has increased funding for CSFP from \$107 in FY 07 to \$160 million for FY 09, and yet the program is barely able to maintain caseload. With a new administration strongly in support of the program, we urge you to work together to allocate a substantial increase for CSFP. We appreciate your consideration of this important request and look forward to working with you to ensure no American goes hungry.

Sincerely,



Sander Levin
Member of Congress

Stephanie Herseth Sandlin
Member of Congress



James McGovern
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

Andre Carson
Member of Congress

Todd Russell Platts
Member of Congress

Gary Peters
Member of Congress

Ruben Hinojosa
Member of Congress

Ellen Tauscher
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John Dingell
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Bart Gordon
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Chaka Fattah
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Lynn Woolsey
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Peter Hoekstra
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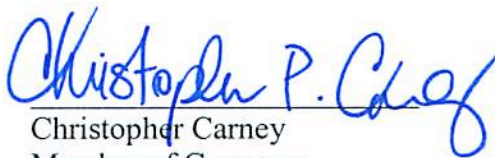

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Member of Congress

Paul Hodes
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Christopher Carney
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Michael Dwyer
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W. J. M.

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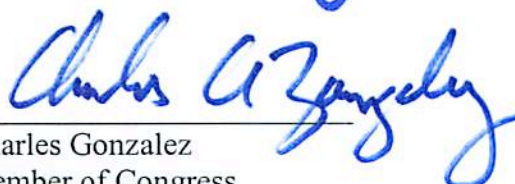
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Pete Stark
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Candice Miller
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Rick Larsen
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Charles Wilson
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